

June 22, 2016, 10 am EST

Via Adobe Connect:

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Connecting diverse knowledge systems—lessons learned for Sustainability Science

Dealing with sustainability challenges in the Anthropocene requires engagement with diverse knowledge system. There is currently a window of opportunity with emerging science-policy arenas that explicitly acknowledge this, such as within the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), Convention on Biological Diversity, and Future Earth. However, the challenge remains regarding how, why, and under what conditions meaningful knowledge mobilization and exchange can contribute towards sustainability pathways. The burgeoning science on co-design and co-production of knowledge has so far not engaged deeply with diverse knowledge systems, more specifically with indigenous and local knowledge systems (ILKS), which have been identified as required for e.g. IPBES. I will discuss why and how indigenous and local knowledge systems carry specific value for sustainable governance of biodiversity and ecosystems services, how ILKS are characterized by unique cultural institutions and governance arrangements that contribute to on-going management, adaptation, and learning, and lastly conditions and designs that enable effective mobilization, translation, negotiation, application, and synthesis of knowledge across knowledge systems.

Maria Tengö is a researcher at the Stockholm Resilience Centre in Stockholm, Sweden and co-leading the research theme Stewardship in Social-Ecological Systems. Her research interests revolve around understanding how positive connections between people and nature can be and are mobilized for social-ecological resilience and transformations towards sustainable governance of ecosystems. She has studied such connections through lenses of local ecological knowledge and institutions, sense of place, and cultural ecosystem services.

Science of the Living City

Seminar Series

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Science of the Living City is organized by the

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